

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A recording medium discharge mechanism provided with a discharge space that is positioned between an original capturing portion arranged in a device upper portion and a feeding portion arranged in a device lower portion and that opens laterally to a downstream side in a recording medium discharge direction, comprising:

~~wherein a side wall member is arranged positioned at an open portion of the downstream side in the recording medium discharge direction, and~~

wherein the side wall member is arranged to be capable of moving between an upright state that closes the open portion and a laid flat state in which a recording medium placement surface for placing a discharged recording medium is extended toward the downstream side in the recording medium discharge direction,

wherein the side wall member is arranged to be in the laid flat state automatically when the recording medium is longer in the recording medium discharge direction than the recording medium placement surface, and

wherein the side wall member is arranged to be in the upright state automatically when the recording medium is not longer in the recording medium discharge direction than the recording medium placement surface.

2. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium discharge mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the recording medium placement surface, which is a bottom surface of the discharge space, is set such that a discharge direction length thereof is shorter than a discharge direction length of a largest recording medium among a plurality of types of recording media used in an image forming apparatus.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The recording medium discharge mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the side wall member is configured such that when a recording medium has been discharged to the discharge space in the upright state that closes the open portion, the upright state changes to the laid flat state only upon receiving an external force from the recording medium.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The recording medium discharge mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the side wall member is configured to go into the laid flat state prior to a discharge operation of a recording medium only when a discharge direction length dimension of the recording medium to undergo image formation in an image-forming portion is longer than a length of a recording medium placement surface of the discharge space.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium discharge mechanism according to claim 1, which is configured such that, when a recording medium discharge direction length dimension of a recording medium placement surface of the discharge space is given as L1, a discharge direction length dimension of a largest recording medium among a plurality of types of recording media used in an image forming apparatus is given as L2, and an extension length dimension toward a downstream side in the recording medium discharge direction when the side wall member has been put into the laid flat state is given as L3,

$$L3 \leq L2 - L1 \text{-----} (1).$$

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The recording medium discharge mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the side wall member is structured using a transparent member or a semitransparent member.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image forming apparatus comprising the recording medium discharge mechanism according to claim 1, an original capturing portion arranged at an upper portion of the recording medium discharge mechanism, and a feeding portion arranged at a lower portion of the recording medium discharge mechanism.

8. (NEW) A recording medium discharge mechanism, comprising:
a recording medium placement surface arranged to receive a recording medium discharged from an image forming system of an imaging apparatus
a side wall member positioned at an open end of the recording medium placement surface on a downstream side in a recording medium discharge direction,

wherein the side wall member is arranged to be automatically in a substantially upright closed state when a length of the recording medium discharged from the image forming system is less than a length of the recording medium placement surface in the recording medium discharge direction, and

wherein the side wall member is arranged to be automatically in a substantially laid flat open state when the length of the recording medium discharged from the image forming system is greater than the length of the recording medium placement surface in the recording medium discharge direction.

9. (NEW) The recording medium discharge mechanism of claim 8, wherein the side wall member is arranged so that when in the upright closed state, the side wall member does not extend beyond the recording medium placement surface in the recording medium discharge direction.

10. (NEW) The recording medium discharge mechanism of claim 8, further comprising a biasing member positioned to bias the side wall member to be in the upright closed state.

11. (NEW) The recording medium discharge mechanism of claim 8, further comprising an active side wall moving mechanism arranged to place the side wall member in either the upright closed state or the laid flat open state based on the length in the recording medium discharge direction of the recording medium prior to the recording medium being discharged from the imaging system.

12. (NEW) The recording medium discharge mechanism of claim 11, wherein the active side wall moving mechanism comprises:

a rod attached to the side wall member; and
a solenoid attached to the rod and arranged to move the rod.

13. (NEW) A method to operate a side wall member of a recording medium discharge mechanism of an imaging apparatus, the recording medium discharge mechanism including a recording medium placement surface arranged to receive a recording medium discharged from an image forming system of the imaging apparatus and wherein the a side wall member is positioned at an open end of the recording medium placement surface on a

downstream side in a recording medium discharge direction, the method comprising:

determining whether the recording medium is longer in the recording medium discharge direction than the recording medium placement surface; and

opening the side wall member to be in a laid flat state when it is determined that the recording medium is longer.

14. (NEW) The method according to claim 13, further comprising:
determining whether the recording medium has been removed from the recording medium placement surface; and

closing the side wall member to be in an upright state when it is determined that the recording medium has been removed.

15. (NEW) The method according to claim 14,
wherein the step of opening the side wall member comprises operating an active side wall moving mechanism attached to the side wall member so that the side wall member is in the laid flat state, and

wherein the step of closing the side wall member comprises operating the active side wall moving mechanism attached to the side wall member so that the side wall member is in the upright state.